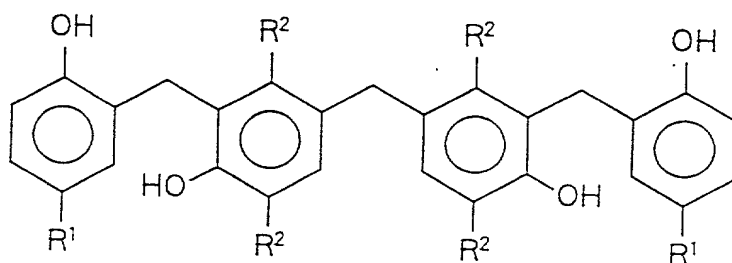


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A positive photoresist composition comprising
 - (A) an alkali soluble resin,
 - (B) a photosensitizer containing a quinonediazide ester of a compound of the following formula (I):

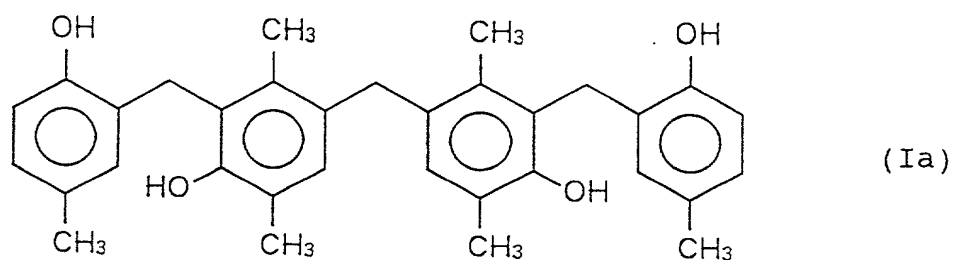


wherein each of R¹ and R² is independently a methyl group or an ethyl group, and

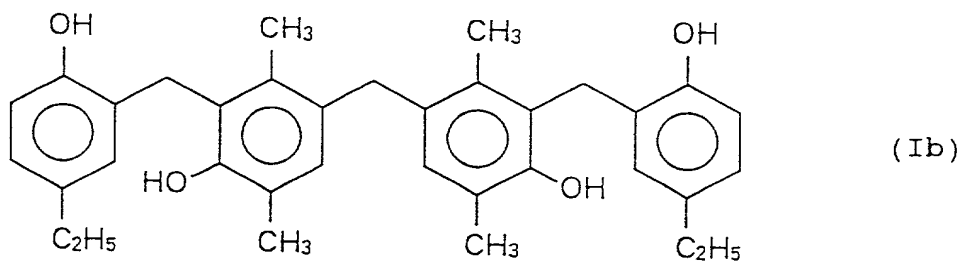
(C) at least one compound of phenol group-containing compounds giving an elution time in the range from 6 to 30 minutes in high performance liquid chromatography, said high performance liquid chromatography being conducted under the following conditions:

eluent: a mixed solvent of water:tetrahydrofuran:methanol = 40:24:36 (by weight); column: 4.6 mm (diameter) x 150 mm (length) containing 5 μ m silica gel as a filler (carbon content being about 15%); column temperature: 45.0°C; supply rate of eluent: 0.700 ml/min.

2. The composition according to claim 1, wherein said compound represented by the formula (I) is a compound of the following formula (Ia):



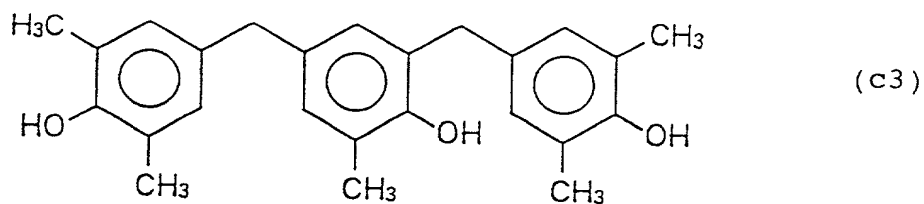
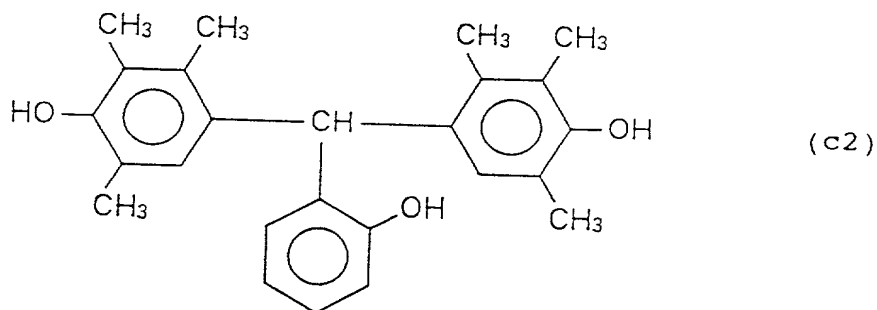
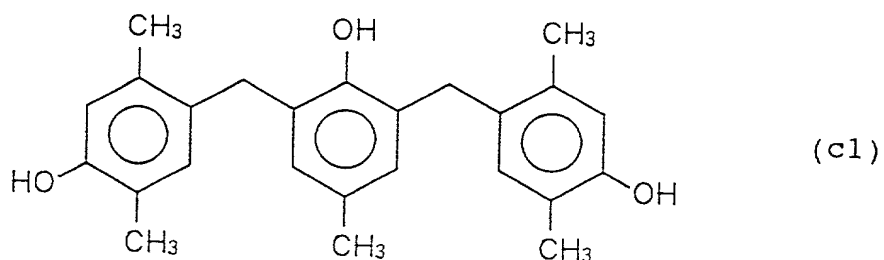
3. The composition according to claim 1, wherein said compound represented by the formula (I) is a compound of the following formula (Ib):

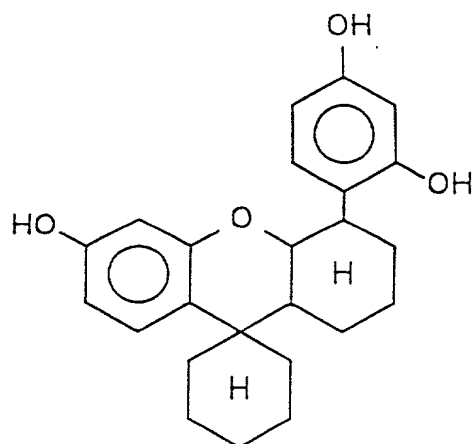


4. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the content of Ingredient (C) ranges from 5% to 50% by weight relative to Ingredient (A).

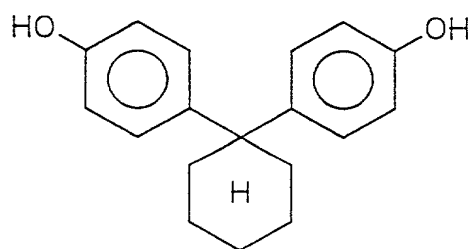
5. The composition according to claim 1, wherein said

phenol group-containing compound, Ingredient (C), is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of the following compounds (c1) through (c6):



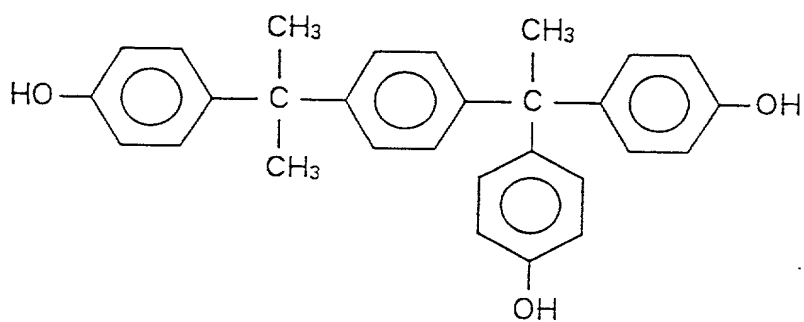


(c4)



(c5)

and



(c6)

6. A process for forming a resist pattern comprising the steps of:

(1) coating the positive photoresist composition of claim 1 onto a substrate having a diameter ranging from 8 to 12 inches, and drying the coated substrate to form a resist film,

(2) subjecting said resist film to selective exposure through a mask,

(3) heating said resist film, and

(4) removing the resist film at exposed positions by an aqueous alkali solution.